

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

---

1. (Currently Amended) A method for creating a prototype for performing a process to solve a problem, the method comprising:  
displaying information indicating a plurality of problems;  
receiving user input ~~specifying~~ selecting a problem from the plurality of problems; and  
automatically creating a prototype including a plurality of elements in response to the ~~specified~~ selected problem, wherein the plurality of elements are operable to interact in order to perform a process that solves the ~~specified~~ selected problem.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1,  
wherein said automatically creating the prototype comprises using previously stored information specifying the elements to include in the prototype.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein said automatically creating includes selecting the prototype from a plurality of stored prototypes, wherein the selected prototype corresponds to the ~~specified~~ selected problem.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1,  
wherein each element included in the prototype is a step representing a function.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein an ordering is associated with the steps in the prototype, the method further comprising:  
performing the functions in the order of their respective corresponding steps in order to perform the process that solves the problem.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving user input to customize the process that is performed; and  
modifying the prototype in response to the user input;  
wherein said modifying the prototype comprises one or more of:  
modifying an element in the prototype;

including another element in the prototype;  
removing an element from the prototype.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
displaying help information regarding the specified selected problem;  
wherein the help information includes information explaining the process that is  
performed in order to solve the specified selected problem.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving information regarding an additional problem to indicate in the plurality  
of problems, wherein the information specifies a plurality of elements to include in a  
prototype in response to a user specifying the additional problem;  
displaying information indicating the additional problem along with the other  
problems in the plurality of problems.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8,  
wherein said receiving information regarding the additional problem comprises  
automatically receiving the information, without user input.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8,  
wherein said receiving information regarding the additional problem comprises:  
connecting to a computer server;  
downloading the information from the computer server.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
programmatically generating a program executable to implement the process  
performed by the prototype.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11,  
wherein the program is a graphical program.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1,  
wherein the plurality of problems comprise one or more problems associated with  
at least one of the disciplines from the group consisting of:

image processing, machine vision, image analysis, robotics, process control,  
industrial automation, test and measurement, simulation, workflow processes, and robotics.

14. (Original) A method for extending the functionality of a prototyping  
environment application, the method comprising:

installing a prototyping environment application operable to automatically create  
a plurality of prototypes, wherein each of the plurality of prototypes is configured to  
perform a process to solve a particular problem;

receiving solution information after said installing, wherein the solution  
information includes information enabling the prototyping environment application to  
automatically create a new prototype;

providing user input requesting the prototyping environment application to  
automatically create the new prototype using the solution information, wherein the new  
prototype is configured to perform a process to solve a new problem.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the prototyping environment  
application is distributed by a first software developer, the method further comprising:

transferring specification information from the first software developer to a  
second software developer, wherein the specification information specifies how to  
construct solution information for the prototyping environment application;

constructing solution information according to the specification information in  
response to user input from the second software developer, wherein the solution  
information enables the prototyping environment application to automatically create a  
new prototype;

wherein said receiving solution information comprises receiving the solution  
information constructed by the second software developer.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the prototyping environment application is distributed by a software developer, the method further comprising:

providing information indicating a new problem to the software developer;  
requesting the software developer to provide solution information enabling the prototyping environment application to automatically create a new prototype configured to perform a process to solve the new problem;

receiving solution information from the software developer enabling the prototyping environment application to automatically create a new prototype configured to perform a process to solve the new problem.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

receiving help information from the software developer explaining the process that is performed in order to solve the new problem.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for creating an image processing prototype for performing a process to solve an image processing problem, the method comprising:

displaying information indicating a plurality of image processing problems;

receiving user input ~~specifying~~ selecting an image processing problem from the plurality of image processing problems; and

automatically including a plurality of elements in the image processing prototype in response to the ~~specified~~ selected image processing problem, wherein the plurality of elements are operable to interact in order to perform a process that solves the ~~specified~~ selected image processing problem.

19. (Currently Amended) A system for creating a prototype for performing a process to solve a problem, the system comprising:

a processor;

a memory coupled to the processor;

a prototyping environment application stored in the memory, wherein the prototyping environment application is operable to:

display information indicating a plurality of problems;  
receive user input ~~specifying~~ selecting a problem from the plurality of problems; and

automatically create a prototype including a plurality of elements in response to the ~~specified~~ selected problem, wherein the plurality of elements are operable to interact in order to perform a process that solves the ~~specified~~ selected problem.

20. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the prototyping environment application is further operable to:

receive information regarding an additional problem to indicate in the plurality of problems, wherein the information specifies a plurality of elements to include in a prototype in response to a user specifying the additional problem;

display information indicating the additional problem along with the other problems in the plurality of problems.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the memory and the processor are associated with a first computer system, the system further comprising:

a second computer system connected to the first computer system via a network;  
wherein said receiving information regarding the additional problem comprises:

establishing a network connection with the second computer system;  
downloading the information via the network connection.

22. (Currently Amended) A memory medium comprising program instructions executable to:

display information indicating a plurality of problems;

receive user input ~~specifying~~ selecting a problem from the plurality of problems;  
and

automatically create a prototype including a plurality of elements in response to the ~~specified~~ selected problem, wherein the plurality of elements are operable to interact in order to perform a process that solves the ~~specified~~ selected problem.

23. (Original) The memory medium of claim 22,  
wherein said creating the prototype comprises using previously stored information  
specifying the elements to include in the prototype.

24. (Original) The memory medium of claim 22,  
wherein each element included in the prototype is a step representing a function.

25. (Original) The memory medium of claim 24, wherein an ordering is  
associated with the steps in the prototype, the memory medium further comprising  
program instructions executable to:

perform the functions in the order of their respective corresponding steps in order  
to perform the process that solves the problem.

26. (Original) The memory medium of claim 22, further comprising program  
instructions executable to:

receive information regarding an additional problem to indicate in the plurality of  
problems, wherein the information specifies a plurality of elements to include in a  
prototype in response to a user specifying the additional problem;

display information indicating the additional problem along with the other  
problems in the plurality of problems.

27. (Currently Amended) A system for creating a prototype for performing a  
process to solve a problem, the system comprising:

a client computer system, wherein the client computer system comprises:

a processor;

a memory coupled to the processor;

a prototyping environment application stored in the memory, wherein the  
prototyping environment application is operable to:

display information indicating a plurality of problems;

receive user input ~~specifying~~ selecting a problem from the plurality of  
problems; and

select a first prototype from a plurality of possible prototypes, wherein the first prototype implements a solution to the ~~specified~~ selected problem;

a server computer system, wherein the server computer system stores a plurality of prototypes;

wherein the client computer system is operable to obtain prototypes from the server computer system.

28. (Original) The system of claim 27,

wherein the server computer system is operable to receive and store prototypes from a plurality of client computer systems.